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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF ACCREDITATION FOR PROGRAMS IN PRACTICAL NURSING

First Edition

NATIONAL LEAGUE FOR NURSING
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I. THE ACCREDITING PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE FOR NURSING FOR PRACTICAL NURSING PROGRAMS

Introduction

The accreditation of educational programs in nursing is one of the ways in which the National League for Nursing fosters the development and improvement of nursing education to the end that the nursing needs of the people will be met. Acknowledgment of this responsibility has been made by NLN membership in the article of the organization's bylaws that describes its functions. The NLN accrediting services for the various types of educational programs in nursing are administered and conducted through four departmental units of the organization's national headquarters: the Department of Practical Nursing Programs, the Department of Diploma Programs, the Department of Associate Degree Programs, and the Department of Baccalaureate and Higher Degree Programs. Each department is responsible for the type or types of programs designated in its title.

NLN is recognized as the national accrediting agency for nursing education by the nursing profession. The Department of Baccalaureate and Higher Degree Programs is recognized as the national accrediting agency for baccalaureate and masters programs in nursing by the National Commission on Accrediting, by the regional accrediting associations, and by the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The National Federation of Licensed Practical Nurses recognizes NLN as the accrediting agency for practical nursing programs and as the organization that can best serve the needs of practical nursing education.

Historically, nursing has a long record of voluntary efforts to raise its educational standards. Accreditation has been an essential part of school improvement. Accrediting activities in nursing education, begun by many different nursing organizations during the 1920's and the 1930's, were centralized in the National Nursing Accrediting Service in 1949. When several national nursing organizations united to form the National League for Nursing in 1952, accrediting in nursing education became the function of NLN's Division of Nursing Education.

The accrediting services of the Department of Practical Nursing Programs are available to all institutions that offer a program in practical nursing. Participation in the NLN accrediting program by any program or school of nursing is voluntary in the sense that there is no legal necessity involved such as there is for approval by a state board of nursing.

The Principles of NLN Accreditation

In January, 1956, the Steering Committee of the Division of Nursing Education of NLN adopted the following statement of principles for the NLN accrediting program:

> The National League for Nursing has as a major objective the improvement of nursing education to the end that better nursing service will be available. Accreditation is accepted as one means of improving educational programs in nursing and is believed to be indispensable to such improvement at this time. The policies, criteria, and procedures followed in accrediting educational programs in nursing are based on principles widely accepted and tested in education for other professions and in general education and found acceptable by national nursing organizations in the past.
>
> Accreditation in nursing is conceived as a program in which the educational units themselves play a vital part. In the process, every effort is made to involve as large a number as possible of the administrative and teaching staff of each educational unit in nursing in its own self-evaluation and thus to encourage self-improvement.
>
> Criteria for accreditation must change as the profession itself evolves and as the society which it serves makes changing demands. The continuing development of these criteria is a responsibility of the membership of the departments of the Division of Nursing Education of the National League for Nursing acting with the advice of their councils of member agencies and in cooperation with comparable departments in areas of nursing service. [As a result of the changes in the NLN bylaws made at the 1965 convention, the development of criteria is now the responsibility of the schools of nursing that are agency members of NLN. The function rests with appropriate councils of agency members. For practical nursing programs, this is the Council of Practical Nursing Programs.]
>
> The individuality of institutions and their special contributions are of paramount importance. Therefore, provided that there is basic conformity to the standards generally accepted by the profession and by society as essential for the effective functioning of the graduates of an institution at the level and in the field for which the institution purports to train, emphasis is placed upon the evaluation of the total program and its general excellence as well as upon its achievement with regard to particular aspects. Furthermore, the dynamic quality of a program and the rapidity with which it is moving toward clearly defined and desirable goals are recognized. This implies that there will be flexibility in accrediting procedures.
>
> The National League for Nursing actively seeks to gain from various groups their understanding, assistance, and support in its continuous efforts to improve nursing education through the accreditation of educational programs in nursing. Such groups include, among others, the National Commission on Accrediting, the several regional accrediting agencies in higher education, the American Nurses' Association, the body in each state which is legally authorized to license nurses to practice, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals, other related groups (general education, hospital administration, medicine, public health), and the public.

The Purposes of NLN Accreditation

The accrediting services of the Department of Practical Nursing Programs have the following purposes:

1. To foster continuous improvement of practical nursing education throughout the United States and its territories and thus to promote improvement of nursing services.
2. To stimulate participation of faculties of practical nursing programs in the continuous process of self-evaluation and self-improvement of their programs.
3. To evaluate practical nursing programs in terms of their ability to meet their own institution's purposes and the accepted criteria for the evaluation of practical nursing programs.
4. To encourage sound educational experimentation and thus to stimulate innovations in nursing.
5. To publish periodically lists of programs currently accredited as meeting the accepted criteria for practical nursing programs.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCREDITING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND THE CRITERIA

Keeping the accrediting policies and procedures and the criteria for practical nursing programs currently satisfactory for their purposes is a continuous process of development. If education is to be dynamic in its adaptation to the changing needs of both students and society and in its improvement of standards through the development of better methods, ways of evaluating it need to change correspondingly.

To maintain the soundness and value of accrediting services, all those concerned must be constantly alert to current developments in education, to the effectiveness of present measures, and to any evidences of need for change. This also requires a thorough review of all policies, procedures, and criteria whenever the need for reconsideration of them becomes apparent and, in any case, at frequent enough intervals to prevent their gradual, unrealized obsolescence.

The Role of Faculties of Practical Nursing Programs in the Accrediting Process

Faculties of educational units in nursing have the major role in the whole process of accreditation. They establish standards for individual nursing programs and determine goals for the over-all development of nursing education.

Faculties of NLN-accredited programs in practical nursing and their representatives on committees of the Council of Practical Nursing Programs share the responsibility for initiating reconsideration of any part or the whole of the accrediting program. When recommended revisions of policies, procedures, or criteria are under consideration, faculty members participate through committee membership in such study and revision. Faculty members also participate in visits for accrediting purposes and serve on the Board of Review for Practical Nursing Programs. They all have a vitally important part, individually and as faculty groups, in the development and maintenance of a sound accrediting program for the benefit of nursing education, the nursing profession, and society as a whole.

The Council of Practical Nursing Programs

The Council of Practical Nursing Programs is a council of the Division of Agency Members of the National League for Nursing. The general purpose of the council is the continuous development and improvement of education in nursing. Its specific purpose is the development and improvement of programs in practical nursing. Agency membership in NLN and in the council is open to educational units that provide programs in practical nursing.

The council's functions and responsibilities include the following:

1. The development and approval of criteria for the appraisal of programs in practical nursing.
2. The development and approval of the policies and procedures of accreditation for programs in practical nursing.

Each agency member in the council designates two persons to serve as its official representatives to vote on its behalf.

The Committees of the Council

The Executive Committee, elected by the council membership for a two-year term, consists of a chairman, a vice-chairman, and six other members. This committee is responsible for guiding the affairs of the council. A Committee on Nominations is elected by the council. The Executive Committee appoints such standing and special committees as it deems appropriate and names the chairmen of these committees.

Special or ad hoc committees may be appointed to carry out specific tasks identified by the council. These tasks may relate to revisions of policies, procedures, or criteria of accreditation, or to other matters of concern to the council. In their functioning, the special or ad hoc committees serve as work groups of the council in drafting revisions of criteria or statements or in performing any other tasks that may be assigned to them. On the basis of recommendations from all sources, they develop tentative drafts of the material required. These drafts are circulated to agency members for faculty review and comment and are revised in light of the reactions and comments received. A final draft is submitted to the council for approval. The entire process preceding official adoption and publication of a revised document may take several years, and it represents the time, work, and judgment of many persons directly involved in practical nursing education.

The Board of Review for Practical Nursing Programs

The Board of Review for Practical Nursing Programs is responsible for the application of the criteria accepted by the council in the evaluation of educational programs for accreditation. It develops its own operating procedures within the established policies and may recommend to the Executive Committee of the council changes in matters relating to accreditation that seem desirable on the basis of its experience.

The Board of Review for Practical Nursing Programs has seven regular members and an equal number of alternates. All are chosen from the faculties of educational units that offer NLN-accredited programs, and all are appointed by the Executive Committee for a four-year term, with no reappointment permitted for two years after the end of the term. The selection of members provides representation of educational units of varying size, units in public as well as private educational institutions, and units conducted by educational institutions in various parts of the United States. A staff member serves as secretary of the board without vote.

The Advisory Committee on Accrediting Procedures

In 1965, the Advisory Committee on Accreditation Policies and Procedures was appointed to assist NLN's Division of Nursing Education in evaluating and improving its program of accreditation. Membership on this committee includes nurse educators, general educators, special educators, and representatives of the National Commission on Accrediting and the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions of Higher Education.

3. THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

As noted earlier, participation in NLN accreditation is voluntary in that there is no legal necessity involved such as there is for approval by a state board of nursing. The reasons for participating are appreciation of the values of association with other institutions and units in promoting progress in education for practical nursing and recognition of the advantages that accrue to nursing and the public from the listing of educational programs that meet the criteria approved by the practical nursing educators.

The administrative officers of an institution with an educational unit in nursing and the faculty of that unit who are thinking of seeking NLN accreditation of their program or programs in practical nursing naturally want to understand in advance the educational standards that apply and the policies and procedures that are followed. The booklet titled *Criteria for the Evaluation of Educational Programs in Practical Nursing* provides information concerning the standards. It is available on request from NLN, and early procurement is helpful. The following pages provide information about necessary preliminaries to application for NLN evaluation of one or more programs and the policies and procedures governing initial and continuing accreditation.

Eligibility for NLN Evaluation

Evaluation of the practical nursing program or programs offered by an educational unit in nursing for accreditation by the National League for Nursing can take place only when the following conditions exist:

I. The junior or senior college or secondary school offering the program is currently approved by the appropriate regional accrediting association: New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, or Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

or

The vocational school offering the program is currently approved by the State Board for Vocational Education.

or

The hospital offering the program is currently approved by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals.

II. An educational unit that offers a program designed to prepare its graduates for licensure as practical nurses is currently approved by the appropriate state legal authority. The responsibility for administering the state laws governing licensure to practice practical nursing in the state and the regulations concerning the educational preparation requisite for safe practice is vested in state authorities that have various titles, but they are generally referred to as state boards of nursing or state boards of practical or vocational nursing. Approval of an educational unit in practical nursing by this authority is legally necessary to make graduates of programs in practical nursing eligible for examination for licensure. Passing the examination for licensure as a practical nurse with the score required by the particular state entitles the graduate of a practical nursing program to use the letters *L.P.N.* or *L.V.N.* after her name. Licensure as a practical vocational nurse indicates that the person has met the legal requirements to practice in the state in which the license is issued.

III. The educational program in nursing has graduated at least one class.

Initiation of the Accrediting Process

The development of the educational program in nursing is the responsibility of the faculty of the educational unit in nursing, with the cooperation of faculties of other units that contribute to the curriculum and with the guidance of administrative officers of the institution. The philosophy, purposes, objectives, and methods of the education are determined by general policies and standards of the institution and by consistent but particularized policies and standards of the educational unit in nursing. When the faculty anticipates applying for NLN accreditation, it may request information or advice from NLN at any stage in this development. Members of the staff answer questions by mail, arrange for office conferences by appointment, and provide consultation services if faculties seek assistance in interpreting general principles in their application to a particular situation. The faculty of the unit decides when in its opinion, based on its own evaluation in terms of NLN criteria, a program is ready for consideration by the Board of Review.

For an educational unit in nursing (a school) that has no NLN-accredited programs, the accrediting process can be initiated by the administrator of the

unit's communicating with NLN's Department of Practical Nursing Programs and indicating that the faculty wishes to plan for accreditation. Such a communication should be made at least a year in advance of the time when it is expected that the program or programs will be ready for a visit.

For an educational unit that already has one or more NLN-accredited programs, planning for a revisit may be initiated in one of two ways: (1) the administrator of the educational unit may communicate with the Department of Practical Nursing Programs relative to an earlier revisit or (2) the staff of the Department of Practical Nursing Programs may notify the school that a routine resurvey is pending. Again, such communications are made at least a year in advance of the proposed revisit in order to permit time for adequate planning on both sides.

After the intention to begin planning for accreditation has been communicated to the Department of Practical Nursing Programs, department staff will begin planning with administrative officers of the school. As a first step, the staff will ask that the school submit an official authorization form signed by administrative officers of the institution offering the program.

The Self-Evaluation Study

The self-evaluation study, which precedes the writing of the report and evaluation by the Board of Review, is the most crucial aspect of accrediting, and it should be the most stimulating and most productive of the many activities comprising the accrediting process.

The self-evaluation study should be a major undertaking that requires the participation of the entire nursing faculty and personnel from other disciplines, administrative officers of the educational institution, and others who can contribute to the faculty's analysis of the nursing unit's program or programs. The self-evaluation study is not merely a cursory review of the *status quo;* it is an honest attempt on the part of the faculty to understand and thoroughly assess where they are in order to determine where they want to go and the means by which they can achieve their goals. Such a self-evaluation will include: (1) a thorough exploration of the philosophy and purposes underlying the unit's educational offerings and services, (2) an assessment of the validity of these purposes in terms of the trends and needs in nursing education, (3) an evaluation of the extent to which the unit is attaining its purposes, based on an intensive analysis of all its activities, and (4) a careful consideration of various ways and means by which the attainment of the purposes might be improved. This examination should include a review of the historical development of the nursing unit and its programs and, in view of the unit's past development and the present and future needs of society for practical nursing, a projection of the future growth and development of

the unit that will be consistent with the institution's purposes, with the purposes of the nursing unit, and with the social, cultural, scientific (particularly in the health sciences), and technological developments in our society. Such a study usually requires several months for completion. Therefore, it should be instituted at the time of the first communications with the Department of Practical Nursing Programs, or even before.

The data accumulated as a result of self-study activities should serve two major purposes: (1) as a basis for continuing development of the programs and services of the educational unit in nursing and (2) as a basis for evidence to be included in the self-evaluation report submitted to the Board of Review.

Preparing the Self-Evaluation Report

The self-evaluation report may be prepared in any narrative form the faculty desires. It should be as concise as possible but should present enough information to permit adequate evaluation of the over-all program or programs by the Board of Review. In writing the self-evaluation report, it should be kept in mind that merely stating that a certain situation exists or that certain criteria are met does not constitute evidence on which the Board of Review can assess the quality of the educational program. Such statements must be accompanied by documentary evidence — facts, examples, et cetera, which should be incorporated into the self-evaluation report whenever possible. Whenever possible, data should be presented in tabular or chart form. If such evidence is too lengthy to be included in the school's report, it should either be summarized in the appendix or the full data should be made available for visitors' use during the accrediting survey visit.

The report should be prepared on paper no larger than 8½″ x 11″ so that it will fit into NLN files. Pages should be numbered and collated according to the table of contents. Each copy of the report should be labeled appropriately. Sufficient copies should be available to supply one copy to each of the two visitors and one copy to NLN three months prior to the visit, seven copies for the Board of Review after the visit, and additional copies for the school's own use.

Submitting the Self-Evaluation Report

The administrator of the educational unit in nursing should send three copies of the evaluation report to the Department of Practical Nursing Programs in such time that they will be received *at least six months* before the desired date of the visit. Also, a copy of the current bulletin or catalog that describes the program of the educational unit in nursing should accompany

each copy of the school's report sent to NLN. (If information pertinent to programs offered by the unit is found in bulletins of other educational units, a copy of these should be sent with each report.) Information about each faculty member's professional vitae should be included in each copy of the report.

Not later than one week after the visit, seven additional copies of the report (including any revisions or additional information suggested by the visitors) should be sent to the *Department of Practical Nursing Programs, National League for Nursing, 10 Columbus Circle, New York, N. Y. 10019.* If the report includes references to bulletins or any other school materials, seven copies of these documents should be included with the report.

It should be noted here that if in the judgment of the visitors, several pages of additional information — such as new curriculm plans with course descriptions, organizational charts, et cetera — need to be submitted to the Board of Review, seven copies of this material should also be sent to NLN by the school. Such material should not be made part of the visitors' report.

Review of the Application

Two members of the Board of Review for Practical Nursing Programs will study the self-evaluation report and other materials submitted with the application in the light of the NLN criteria. On the basis of this review, they will indicate their opinions as to the program's readiness for a visit—that is the likelihood that it meets the established criteria sufficiently to warrant a visit. If the two reviewers of an application disagree about the program's readiness for a visit, the application materials will be referred to a third member of the Board of Review.

Each reviewer is also asked to list comments that would be helpful to the faculty responsible for the program. A compilation of the comments of the reviewers of a program is sent to the nurse coordinator/director of the school and the administrative officer of the controlling institution.

If the majority opinion of the reviewers is that evaluation would be premature, the school or the unit is urged to defer the request for a visit and to take steps to correct the weaknesses pointed out in the reviewers' comments. However, the final decision about whether a visit is to be made rests with the school or the educational unit.

The Accreditation Visit

Arrangements for the visit are made by the staff of the department. Insofar as is possible, the wishes of the faculty of the school are taken into consid-

eration when the date of the visit is set, but the faculty should realize that other factors influence the timing of the visit. In the scheduling of visits, account must be taken of the number of schools seeking the accrediting services and the need for economy in operating these services. It is important that arrangements for a visit be made well in advance.

The Selection of Visitors

Several months in advance of the scheduled time for the accrediting visit, staff of the Department of Practical Nursing Programs will send the school the names of the prospective visitors who have been selected on the basis of the preliminary information provided. If any one of these visitors is not acceptable to the faculty, the Department of Practical Nursing Programs should be notified and another name will be submitted.

Joint Visits With the Department Of Associate Degree Programs

The Department of Practical Nursing Programs tries to plan a joint visit with the Department of Associate Degree Programs when an associate degree program and a practical nursing program are conducted by the one college or university. After the visit, each program is evaluated by the appropriate Board of Review.

The Visiting Team

The visiting team is usually made up of two members. The members are chosen on the basis of experience and competence in practical nursing education, and the number is sufficient to encompass the necessary activities in a relatively short visit and to facilitate balanced judgment about the observations that are made. Usually, the visitors are faculty members from accredited programs in the region but not in the state where the unit is located. On occasion, departmental staff members also serve when faculty visitors are not available. One of the team is designated as the senior representative, but both of the visitors work closely together and share responsibility for all aspects of the visit. One of the visitors, usually the senior representative, is present at the Board of Review meeting when the program visited is being discussed.

The Purpose of the Visit

The purpose of the visit is to supplement the self-evaluation report submitted by the faculty, so that the Board of Review will have a clear and complete picture of the educational unit in nursing and its programs. It is the

responsibility of the visitors to *clarify* and *verify* the report prepared by the faculty, to seek additional information that may be pertinent to the board's evaluation, and to write a report that supplements the faculty's self-evaluation report. In addition, the visitors are responsible for including in their report an assessment of the strengths of the programs and of any areas needing improvement.

Arrangements for the Visit

Housing.—As soon as a definite date has been set for the visit, the administrator of the educational unit in nursing should make arrangements for suitable hotel accommodations for the visitors. Visitors should be housed in single rooms, preferably adjacent to or near each other, at moderate rates. Good lighting, accommodations for reading and writing, and restaurant facilities are essential.

Office space and materials.—The administrator of the nursing unit should also arrange for an office or conference room (preferably in or adjacent to the offices of the educational unit in nursing) in which materials for visitors can be assembled and in which they can read and work during the two days of the visit. Among the materials that, if available, should be assembled in this room for visitors are the faculty handbook, the student handbook, the minutes of recent meetings (not more than two years of meetings) of the faculty organization and its committees, outlines for courses and other materials developed by the faculty that are pertinent to the curriculum, samples of student projects or papers, the class and clinical laboratory schedule for the week of the visit, the latest state board report, the annual reports of the administrator of the nursing unit to the chief administrative officer of the institution, contracts or agreements with cooperating facilities, the current budget or financial statement of the school of nursing, the description of and specifications for each faculty position, studies or reports of meetings held for the purpose of evaluating the school and its program, the master plan of the curriculum, and any other interpretive materials that the faculty deems essential to the visitors' understanding of the program being surveyed. One copy of each of these materials is sufficient. They will be used only during the visit and left at the school upon completion of the visit unless special permission to do otherwise has been granted by the administrator of the nursing unit. Records of students enrolled and of recent graduates of the program need not be pulled in advance of the visit, since visitors can review these during the visit in the office where they are filed.

In addition to the above, it is recommended that before the end of the visit, the school provide the visitors with a typewritten list of the names and titles of all the persons interviewed during the visit (especially those not listed

in the school publications). The inclusion of such a list in the visitors' report promotes accuracy and averts the need for extensive corrections in the draft of the report.

Conduct of the Visit

Visitors will have read the self-evaluation report and other materials prepared by the school and will meet together on the evening of their arrival at the hotel to discuss the forthcoming visit. They will meet with the administrator of the educational unit in nursing on the morning of the first day in order to plan and schedule activities during the visit. It is recommended that the faculty have a tentative schedule outlined, but it should be flexible. Only meetings with administrative officers or activities that must be planned well in advance should be rigidly set. In planning, it should be remembered that visitors will need to have some time set aside on each day of the visit to peruse the additional materials the faculty has assembled for them.

The length of time visitors spend on the visit depends on several factors—*e.g.*, the complexity of the program or programs, the geographical location of the various resources used for student experiences, the size of the program, et cetera. Visitors usually spend about a day and a half in meetings, conferences, and observations. Activities usually planned for the visit are: (1) preliminary and closing conferences with the administrator of the nursing unit and her assistant (if any); (2) conferences with groups of faculty or with individual faculty members and/or a meeting with the entire nursing faculty; (3) a conference with administrative officers of the institution concerned with the program in practical nursing; (4) conferences with selected faculty members in other disciplines where practical nursing students take foundational courses; (5) visits to selected agencies where visitors can observe and talk with students in the clinical setting (visitors do not generally visit clinical facilities where there are no students at the time of the visit); (6) conferences with students; and (7) review of various school materials and records.

Upon the completion of the visit, the visitors will plan to read their report or a summary of its contents, including strengths of the program and areas needing improvement, if the administrator of the nursing unit wishes them to do so. It is left to the discretion of the administrator to select the audience for this reading.

The Visitors' Report

The visitors' report includes verification of data, documentary statements, and additional descriptive material essential to a clear and concise picture of all aspects of the educational program or programs in practical nursing. It also includes the visitors' assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of

the program. This report is intended to supplement rather than to duplicate the school's self-evaluation report. While visitors consider each aspect of each program being reviewed—*i.e.*, philosophy and objectives, organization and administration, faculty and faculty organization, students, resources and facilities, curriculum development and instruction, evaluation, faculty studies, future plans for the nursing program—in some instances, the data presented by the faculty in its report may be complete, and visitors may have little or nothing to report in some areas.

Visitors send the handwritten report to the Department of Practical Nursing Programs, where it is typed on stencils. Carbon copies are sent to the chief administrative officer of the educational institution and to the administrator of the educational unit in nursing for review, corrections, clarification, et cetera. When the carbons with pertinent comments from the school are returned to the Department of Practical Nursing Programs, corrections of a factual nature are made in the body of the report itself. Other comments are incorporated into the report in footnotes clearly labeled as comments from the faculty or administrative officers.

Evaluation by the Board of Review For Practical Nursing Programs

The Board of Review for Practical Nursing Programs meets twice a year, usually late in June and early in December. At each of its meetings, the board evaluates those programs visited during the preceding period (and those visited too late for consideration at its previous meeting) and considers any progress reports or special requests that have been submitted since its previous meeting.

Prior to the board meeting, the schools are notified of the date and time at which their program or programs will be reviewed. Schools may send representatives to meet with the board at their own request or at the request of the board.

The board will consider requests of a special nature from schools at any of its meetings. Such a request might be for reappraisal of a program that has been evaluated recently and not granted initial approval. The administrator of an educational unit in nursing contemplating such a request should communicate with the Department of Practical Nursing Programs staff for further instructions.

As one part of its evaluation process, the board formulates recommendations or suggestions to provide the school with some guidance in its ongoing program development. These recommendations or suggestions are made in relation to the published *Criteria*. They may or may not relate to the same areas as those that the visitors delineated as needing improvement. In some

instances, the board may request that a progress report based on its recommendations be submitted at a specified time. The board's decision on accreditation of the program or programs under consideration is sent to the administrative officer of the educational institution and to the administrator of the educational unit in nursing on the day the board meeting is adjourned. A letter including the board's comments and recommendations follows within a month.

Three-quarters of the board members must agree on the action to be taken in regard to each educational program reviewed. The following motions, made and seconded by individual members of the board, constitute the choices of action that may be taken in regard to each program:

Motion I. That the program be given initial or continuing approval:

1. With recommendations.
2. Without recommendations.
3. With request for a progress report within a specified period of time.
4. With specified conditions or with combinations of the above.

Motion II. That action be deferred for a specified time pending receipt of additional evidence based on one or more of the following:

1. A progress report.
2. A supplementary report.
3. A meeting of representatives of the unit with the board or designated representatives of the board.
4. Other required action.

Motion III. That approval not be granted. (When this action is taken, the board cites the criteria that have not been met and recommends steps that can be taken to meet them. The educational unit in nursing has the privilege of reapplying for accreditation without a revisit at any time.)

Periodic Reevaluation

An accredited program is normally revisited and reevaluated for accreditation by NLN every six years. More frequent visits may be requested by the board. Departmental staff send a reminder to the administrator of the educational institution and the administrator of the unit in nursing that a reevaluation of the program or programs is due within a specified period, and they are consulted as to a suitable time for the visit. The procedures for reevaluation are the same as those for initial accreditation.

Accreditation is continued, often with comments on satisfactory or exceptional progress. If deficiencies are noted, recommendations are made and a report on the progress in meeting these recommendations is required at a specified time. When the quality of a program is unsatisfactory or previous recommendations have not been satisfactorily followed, accreditation of the program is never immediately withdrawn. The unit is warned that accreditation will be withdrawn if specific improvements are not made within a certain time. Recommendations are confidential, and the unit is given every possible opportunity to make the required improvements. When the Board of Review has voted to withdraw accreditation, a school is offered the opportunity of having a revisit prior to the removal of its name from the list of NLN-accredited programs.

The Appeal

If the administration of the institution of which the educational unit in nursing is a part questions the decision of the Board of Review, it has the privilege of appealing the decision before a panel representing the Executive Committee of the Council of Practical Nursing Programs. Such an appeal is necessarily based on the program described in the reports previously evaluated by the board, without reference to subsequent developments or plans. Application for reconsideration by the Board of Review is the appropriate measure when any improvements of a program have been well-enough established to make evaluation of their effectiveness possible.

When the appeal is made, representatives of the institution and the unit present their evidence to the panel. This panel is composed of the chairman of the Executive Committee or a member of that committee designated by her, who serves as chairman of the appeal panel; the chairman of the Executive Committee also appoints a committee of three members who act as referees. Two of the members are nurse educators representing NLN-accredited programs, and the third is a general educator. The chairman of the Board of Review is present when the appeal is presented and participates in the discussion but not in the decision. It is the function of the three referees, with the required agreement of the chairman of the panel, to decide whether, according to the evidence submitted at the time the program was evaluated for accreditation, the Board of Review made a correct decision. The appeal panel may decide to uphold the decision of the Board of Review, or it may request the board to reconsider its decision.

An appeals fee is necessary to defray the costs of the procedure. It must accompany the application for appeal.

Publication of the List

The complete official listing of practical nursing programs currently accredited by the Department of Practical Nursing Programs of NLN is published annually in the January or February issue of *Nursing Outlook*; a supplementary list is published in the July issue of *Nursing Outlook*.

Confidentiality of Accreditation Information

All data, observations, conversations, conclusions, reports, and minutes relating to NLN accrediting activities are confidential. Acceptance of membership on the Board of Review or on a visiting team constitutes a contractual agreement to safeguard the confidentiality of information acquired in these capacities. However, data about educational programs in nursing have considerable intrinsic value for research in nursing education. To protect the confidential nature of the data and at the same time to make them available for bona fide research, the following policies have been adopted: (1) The files are opened to persons doing research only when in the judgment of the general director of NLN and/or the director of the Department of Practical Nursing Programs, the project will contribute to the NLN program and is under competent direction. (2) In no instance may a particular school be identified in reports subsequently prepared by the research worker. (3) Release of materials resulting from the study may not be made without the knowledge and approval of NLN.